THE CASE OF THE MISSING ETHNICITY:

INDIANS WITHOUT TRIBES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by

Carolyn A. Liebler *
University of Minnesota

and

Meghan Zacher *
University of Minnesota

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Abstract

Among American Indians and Alaska Natives, most aspects of ethnicity are tightly associated with the person's tribal origins. Language, history, foods, land, and traditions differ among the hundreds of tribes indigenous to the United States. Why did almost one million of them fail to respond to the tribal affiliation part of the Census 2000 race question? We investigate four hypotheses about why one-third of multiracial American Indians and one-sixth of single-race American Indians did not report a tribe: (1) survey item non-response which undermines all fill-in-the-blank questions, (2) a non-salient tribal identity, (3) a genealogy-based affiliation, and (4) mestizo identity which does not require a tribe. We use multivariate logistic regression models and high-density restricted-use Census 2000 data. We find support for the first two hypotheses and note that the predictors and results differ substantially for single race versus multiple race American Indians.

Keywords: Ethnic identity, American Indian, U.S. Census, tribe

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As the public understanding of "race" becomes more nuanced, and the right to racial self-definition becomes more engrained in American culture, it can be difficult to understand what people intend to communicate when they answer formal or official questions about their race. They may be reporting how they see themselves or how others see them; they may be reporting their most salient heritage or their entire family tree; they may be trying to communicate an identity that does not fit into a listed category; or they may not find the question meaningful at all.

On the US Census and other federal surveys, people who mark "American Indian or Alaska Native" (hereafter shortened to "American Indian") are asked to provide a bit more information (i.e., tribal affiliation) than are people reporting most other races. Among indigenous Americans, tribal affiliation is comparable to ethnic identity. Yet even as more and more people racially identify as American Indian (Passel 1997; Passel and Berman 1986), a substantial fraction of American Indians do not report a tribe when specifically asked on the US Census. About 17 percent of single-race American Indians and about 33 percent of multiple-race American Indians omitted this information in Census 2000. [1] In other words, they report racial identities but not ethnic identities.

[1] This is a higher non-response rate than most other fill-in-the-blank questions solicit. In Census 2000, 9 per cent of non-English speakers did not report their language, 10 per cent of people did not report their place of birth, 4 per cent did not report where they lived five years ago, 19 per cent did not report their "ancestry or ethnic origin", and 10 per cent of eligible respondents did not report their occupation.

In this research, we leverage this information (or lack thereof) to gain insight into why some people seem to have a racial identity without an ethnic identity. Our research questions are: (1) why do some American Indians NOT report a tribe? And (2) are the reasons for tribal non-response different for single-race versus multiple-race American Indians?

Tribal affiliation

The census measure of tribal affiliation is separate from official tribal membership. As sovereign entities, the hundreds of tribal governments in the US have the federally supported right to determine official membership in their tribes and most have strict rules for membership. Many federal and tribe-funded programs for American Indians are only open to people who have attained official tribal membership. Thornton (1997) provides more information about this topic.

In the census, people who mark "American Indian or Alaska Native" as their race are asked to write in their "enrolled or principal tribe." Because the Census Bureau relies on self-identification on matters of race, the census item simply measures affiliation, not official membership. The census is known to identify many more American Indians than are currently on any tribal membership lists (Thornton 1997; Bureau of the Census 2008). However, the census data are used extensively to distribute federal funds and set other race-related policies (Bureau of the Census 2008), so the census responses are far from inconsequential.

The role of ethnicity

Ethnic groups are typically defined by shared cultural practices (van den Berghe 1967) and ethnic identity is expected to have personal meaning to individuals (Hale 2004). Race, on the other hand, is generally recognized by physical criteria (van den Berghe 1967) and is enforced and imposed by outsiders (e.g., Snipp 1989; Srinivasan and Guillermo 2000). Members of racial minority groups are usually described as having ethnicity-specific knowledge that they draw upon as they navigate the American social landscape (c.f. Lee and Zhou 2004; Waters 1996) and which is the basis for the group's disadvantage, discrimination, and distinction (Rughiniş 2011). More psychological understandings of ethnic identity emphasize the vital importance of ethnic group membership to a minority person's healthy self-concept, high self-esteem, and sense of efficacy (Phinney 1992; Stonequist 1961).

Following these arguments, many social researchers expect each racial minority group member to have a specific and meaningful ethnic identity. Specifically, they would expect each American Indian to have a tribal affiliation and thus to report it on the census form. The United Nations explained this traditional approach in the *Demographic Yearbook* of 1963 (p.39), saying:

> Where the investigations have been concerned with more or less endogamous groups which have existed for many generations within a country, each person is usually well aware of the group to which he belongs, and there is little difficulty in obtaining the information. This would apply to responses concerning tribal affiliation and indigenous Indian populations and other aboriginal peoples. In other cases, however, the adequacy of individual responses may be seriously affected by the clarity of the question used and by the explanatory material provided.

If this is true, the only reason not to report a tribe would be regular survey item non-response in which information is missing at random (De Leeuw 2001).

However, there may be more going on here than simple survey non-response. Race theorists recognize that not everyone has a strong ethnic identity; it may be symbolic, optional, or situational, or affiliative (Gans 1979; Jiménez 2010; Okamura 1981; Waters 1990). For example, American whites have been found to have mild attachments to ethnic identity (e.g., Waters 1990; Hout and Goldstein 1994), and some African American people have "low race salience" such that they are not focused on their race or ethnicity (Worrell et al. 2006). American Indians' political relationship with the federal government has left them subject to the ravages of federal policies of segregation and assimilation, which have complicated internally-understood and externally presented identities (Garroutte 2003; Lobo 1990:33).

In the following sections, we use prior research to develop four hypotheses about why tribal non-response was so common in Census 2000 and discuss hypothesized differences between single-race and multiple-race American Indians' non-response. We then estimate logistic regression models predicting tribal non-response among single-race American Indians and (separately) multiple-race American Indians using the restricted-use high-density sample of data from Census 2000. First, however, we detail the significance of this research.

Significance of the research

The existence and prevalence of minorities without strong ethnic affiliation has broad implications. If non-response is meaningful, it would imply that even within this residentially segregated and economically oppressed minority group with hundreds of tribal governments and thousands of tribe-specific laws and policies, a pan-tribal or non-tribal version of ethnic identity has emerged. These changes in ethnic group boundaries (Barth 1969; Cornell and

Hartmann 1997) beg investigation. Additionally, our results may provide insight into experiences of Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Latinos who did not report their particular country of origin on the census.[2] The underlying reasons for such omissions might parallel those of the American Indians in this study.

American Indians without tribal affiliation are also likely to be poorly-understood and excluded from relevant policies and programs. Tribes and federal entities (e.g., the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service) use census-generated tribe-specific information about people to plan and implement policies; non-tribal people are often left out. If those who do not report tribal affiliation are also without tribal enrollment, then they are also disqualified from tribal or federal financial or service support. Many of their needs are likely to remain unmet.

This research also has direct implications for the US Census Bureau. The purpose of the Census is to enumerate basic demographic characteristics of every individual residing in the United States at the time the census is taken. Some non-response is inevitable and is not particularly alarming if information is missing at random. However, it is possible that available tribal data may be biased due to selective non-response.

[2] 9.3 per cent of people who marked "Other Asian" and 32 per cent of those who marked "Other Pacific Islander" on the Census 2000 race question neglected to write any specifics in the corresponding write-in box (see Figure 1, below). 57 per cent of people who marked "other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" did not write in a country of origin.

Literature review and hypotheses

Based on existing research and theory, we identify four hypotheses regarding the high levels of tribal-non-response among American Indians in Census 2000. We discuss four explanations for whether a person will report a tribe: (1) standard survey item non-response, (2) American Indian identities for which tribal affiliation is not salient, (3) genealogy-based identity, and (4) mestizo identities for which tribal identity is not necessary.

Survey item non-response

Survey item non-response is an issue in all surveys and censuses. Non-response to survey items is especially common for write-in questions.

People who utilized the new Census option to mark multiple races may be especially responsive to all survey questions (including tribe) because of their demonstrated ability to follow instructions completely. Perhaps tribal non-response among multiple-race American Indians would be even higher without this hypothesized underlying propensity to be responsible survey participants.

Some respondents cannot or will not fill in blanks on surveys, so we measure whether the person responded to the ancestry question (which is asked of all respondents); failure to respond to this question may suggest the person possesses a tendency to leave such spaces blank. People living in metropolitan areas are more likely to skip fill-in-the-blank questions (Goyder 1982). Elderly people have also been found to be less responsive to survey questions (Colsher and Wallace 1989). Similarly, people with low literacy or English language skills may have trouble with the form (Lobo 1990), so we include a measure of whether the person has less than a high school education and whether the person speaks English.

Additionally, we highlight respondents who report any West Indian or Asian Indian ancestry because they may have misunderstood the meaning of the term "American Indian" on the race question and may not be indigenous to North America. If that were true, they would have no tribe to report.

Salience of racial and ethnic identities

Not all identities can be equally salient, and relative salience can change across time and circumstance (Sellers et al. 1998). A second hypothesis about why some American Indians do not report a tribal affiliation is that their tribe was not among their salient identities at the time of the census.

Prior research examining American Indians in the 1990 census suggests that salience of tribal identity contributes to survey response for the tribal affiliation question (Liebler 2004). That study found that about one-tenth of American Indians did not report their tribal affiliations in Census 1990, but those who did were likely to live in an historically American Indian area or live with someone who speaks an American Indian language. Lack of knowledge of family history emerged as a key cause of tribal non-response. We build on these results in the current research by studying tribal non-response among multiracial American Indians -- something which has not been possible using earlier data.

Individuals who did take advantage of the new option to mark multiple races on the 2000 census may have been especially likely to not only read the instructions and take the question itself seriously, but also have a salient attachment to their newly added race(s). Following this logic, the people who reported more than one race could be expected to be more likely to write in their tribal affiliation.

Another possibility is that American Indian tribal identities are less salient than competing identities among those who are also members of another racial or ethnic group (e.g., black or Latino) and which may receive more support in interactions with others (Khanna 2004).This hypothesis is buttressed by other research. Multiple-race American Indians often have inconsistent answers to survey questions about race (Doyle and Kao 2007; Harris and Sim 2002). African Americans in the United States are often assumed by others to be "just black" (c.f., Davis 1991), regardless of their indigenous heritage. Also, because of home births and poorly marked grave sites, black families have relatively little available genealogical information (Burroughs 2001) and may be missing information about their tribal origins. People who were born abroad may find their international origins more salient than their tribal origins. They also may be unfamiliar with US concepts of race, ethnicity, and ancestry.

Alternatively, a person might have a salient pan-Indian identity -- a racial identity that overwhelms the ethnic identity. Pan-Indian identities can develop through involvement in social movements about cross-tribal issues (Nagel 1994, 1995). Broad racial identities are also theoretically possible outcomes of experiences with a society that finds ethnic affiliation meaningless (Alba and Islam 2009).

People who use tribe-related knowledge in daily life are expected to have salient tribal identities and be very likely to report their tribe to the Census Bureau. Languages and homelands are tribally specific and are expected to be especially strong indicators of salience, even if the homeland or language is not affiliated with their own tribe (Liebler 2010). Salience may also be increased by co-residence with a biological relative (with whom they would share tribal affiliation) or co-residence with another American Indian. People who write in an

American Indian response in the separate "ancestry or ethnic origin" question may be seen as indicating a salient American Indian identity.

Genealogy-based identification

A third possibility is that many of the people who first racially identified as American Indian in 2000 (see Passel 1997) have recently (re)discovered their American Indian heritage, or (relatedly) have recently enhanced their ancestral knowledge to such an extent that they report it as a race on a government form. In other words, we hypothesize that some racially-identified American Indians may have Native identities which are based on genealogical research or family stories rather than on personal experiences. This racially American Indian identity may be symbolic in that it does not guide the details of daily life (Gans 1979) or situational (Yancey et al. 1976) such that is used in only on occasion (Khanna 2004).

American Indians who discovered this racial identity through genealogical research may be particularly interested in this identity and thus willing respondents to census questions about race. We predict that people who have done genealogical research will be more likely to report a tribe because tribal information is sought after in genealogical studies, and erroneous or incomplete tribal information can be entered on the census form without penalty.

We expect those most strongly socialized to study their genealogy – and thus are especially likely to report a tribal affiliation – include women, middle-aged people, and relatively educated people. Women are substantially more likely than men to note American Indian ancestries on federal surveys (Liebler and Zacher 2010). Because of their traditional roles as kin-keepers (Reiss and Oliveri 1983), women are encouraged to take an interest in family. Middle-aged and older Americans are normatively engaged in preserving family history. Elders

probably witnessed dramatic changes in government policies towards their tribe, and may feel a special attachment to tribe's history and collective memory. Higher education, especially college, could encourage increased emphasis on a minority identity as a reaction to outside influence or in response to college classes focused on diversity (Khanna and Johnson 2010). Cynics may see this heightened minority identity as also driven by interest in scholarships and other benefits earmarked for minorities (Khanna and Johnson 2010). Most of these causal mechanisms would act to increase the likelihood that the person would report a tribal or ethnic identity.

Mestizo identity among multiracial Latino American Indians

People from Mexico, Central America, and South America often embrace a "mestizo" identity, which explicitly melds European, African, and indigenous heritages but does not emphasize tribal identity in the North American sense (Lobo 1990; Miller 2004). Our fourth hypothesis is that some American Indians who did not report a tribe are, in fact, Latinos who are aiming to report a mestizo identity on the census form which does not have a more direct way to indicate this. A person reporting a mestizo identity would, theoretically, mark three races (American Indian, white, and black) and would report Latino in the separate Hispanic origin question. Because many groups indigenous to Latin America never developed tribe-level names or identities, a tribal response would not necessarily be part of this complex response pattern.

Multiracial American Indians in Comparison

The number of American Indians counted in 2000 – about 4 million – was almost twice as large as the number of American Indians counted in 1990. Much of this tremendous increase was due to the new race question, which allowed multiple race responses in 2000 and drew

American Indian responses from mixed-heritage people who were previously forced to choose one race. The strength of racial identity for those who first reported American Indian race in 2000 may be relatively modest, especially among those who do not report their tribe (Liebler 1994).

One major aim in this research is to better understand whether the multiple-race American Indians are fundamentally similar to single-race American Indians such that the same factors predict tribal non-response with the same power in both populations. If the factors predicting tribal non-response are similar in the two groups, then the higher rate of non-response among multiple-race American Indians is precipitated by a higher prevalence of predictive factors in the multiracial group.

On the other hand, American Indians who mark multiple races fundamentally differ from American Indians who only write down one race. These respondents might be especially attuned to their heritage and eager to report all parts of it; they might have developed a pan-tribal identity as part of their multiracial identity; and/or they might be Latinos who finally have a way to report their mestizo identity. Additionally, some research results indicate that multiracial American Indians' racial identity varies considerably across time and circumstance. Specifically, like the fluctuating ethnic responses given by whites (Waters 1990), part-American Indian teens have been shown to be quite inconsistent in their race responses (Doyle and Kao 2007; Harris and Sim 2002).

Data, Sample Selection, Method, and Measures

Data

To conduct these analyses, we use data from the US Census 2000 which covers all people living in the US. Unlike most data about American Indians, the census data do not select on the dependent variable (ethnic identity). We use restricted census data available through the Census Research Data Center network because the public-use versions of the data do not provide any tribal information for American Indians who report multiple races. The restricted data are also excellent because they are a high-density sample of the US population (a 1-in-6 sample) and thus the number of cases available for analyses is quite large. To ensure respondent confidentiality when using these restricted-use data, we round our Ns to the nearest 100.

Sample Selection

The Census 2000 question on race, shown in Figure 1, asked "What is person X's race? Mark one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be." We start with individuals who marked "American Indian or Alaska Native," either alone or in combination with other races. Of this group, 17 percent of single-race and 33 percent of multiple-race American Indians did not answer the tribal affiliation question. In the restricted use data, there are about 456,600 single-race cases and about 289,000 multi-racial cases.[3] Note that not all

[3] All case counts in the text of this section represent the unweighted number of cases in the data.

people with American Indian heritage report this as a race; many millions report it as an ancestry only and are not covered by this research.

[FIGURE 1]

In order to increase the likelihood that each member of our sample marked his or her own race on the census form, we restrict our analytic sample to "householders."[4] There are 144,400 single-race and 100,700 multiple-race American Indian householders in the restricted-use Census 2000 data. Though it excludes many people, this sample restriction has three main benefits. First, in many households, one person (likely, the "householder") fills out the census form for everyone in the home, and may project his or her own beliefs onto other household members. Second, this ensures that only one case from any particular household is analysed; within-household correlations are very high (Liebler 2004). And third, group quarters – where the person filling out the census form may barely know the residents – are eliminated from the sample.

We impose two additional sample restrictions. We require a minimum age of 25 for sample membership to guarantee the relevance of the education and income measures, excluding 9,600 single-race and 6,200 multiple race American Indian householders. We also

[4] The householder, or the first person listed on the census form, is defined to be "the person, or one of the people, in whose name the home is owned, being bought, or rented," and if these conditions are not met by anyone, any household member above the age of 15 can qualify as the householder for the purposes of the census (http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/epss/glossary_f.html).

exclude about 1,800 single-race and 1,000 multiracial American Indian householders over age 25 whose race(s) were imputed by the Census Bureau.

All remaining American Indians were included in this study. The final sample size is 133,000 single-race cases and 93,500 multiple-race cases. We can generalize our weighted results to all householders ages 25 and older in the US in 2000 who reported American Indian as their race or as one of their races – about 698,900 and 592,000 people, respectively.

Method

We first divide the sample into: (a) single-race American Indians and (b) multiple-race American Indians. We estimate a sequence of logistic regression models (Tables 2 through 5) to address the four hypotheses separately. We end with logistic regression models that include all variables (Table 6) because all hypothesized processes could be simultaneously at work.

Dependent Variable: Tribal non-response

On the Census 2000 form, a write-in box immediately following the bubble for American Indian or Alaska Native race asked people to "Print name of enrolled or principal tribe" (see Figure 1). The Census Bureau coded up to two tribes for each person. Our dependent variable is a binary indicator of whether or not the person wrote any response at all in this section of the race question. Our analyses uncover reasons for this missing ethnicity information.

Independent variables

The census data include many measures related to at least one of our four primary hypotheses about tribal non-response. We display descriptive information for single-race and multiple-race American Indians in Table 1, including the approximate number of cases in the category and the percent of respondents in the category who did not report a tribe.

[TABLE 1]

Age: We use a three-category measure of age: 25 to 44, 45 to 75, and older than 75. Although multiracial people in general are a young group, our multiple-race sample members are householders and are slightly older, on average, than the single-race householders. Age shows little relationship to tribal non-response except that more than 40 percent of multiracial people in the oldest group did not report their tribe.

Gender: Men are more likely to be listed as the householder and so the women in this sample may be systematically different from other adult American Indian women. The bivariate differences between men's and women's tribal non-response is minimal; a slightly higher percent of female multiracial American Indian householders than males omitted their tribal information.

Education: We measure education as: (1) less than high school; (2) high school graduate or GED; (3) some college or an associate's degree; and (4) bachelor's degree or more. Compared to the single-race people in our sample, a higher proportion of multiple-race American Indians have completed college. The least educated people in both samples have relatively high tribal non-response while a relatively low proportion of the more educated people neglect to report their tribe.

English ability: Respondents who speak a non-English language were asked a follow-up question: "How well do you speak English?" Possible answer choices were "Very well," "Well," "Not well," and "Not at all." Our bivariate measure denotes whether or not the person reported speaking English "not well" or "not at all." People who speak English poorly have much higher tribal non-response rates, perhaps because they were not able to easily read the census form.

Language in home: We code households according to whether or not anyone in the home speaks an American Indian language. Almost all single-race American Indians (93 percent) who live with someone who speaks an American Indian language do report a tribal affiliation.

Ancestry: Respondents were asked "What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?" and up to two responses were provided in the data. We created four mutually exclusive categories: (1) American Indian in any part of the ancestry question; (2) West Indian or Asian Indian ancestry, but not American Indian ancestry; (3) any other ancestry response; and (4) ancestry not reported.

Most people who report American Indian in both the race and the ancestry questions also report their tribal affiliation. Conversely, many people who did not respond to the ancestry question also did not respond to the tribal affiliation question. For example, 45 percent of multiracial people in our sample who left the ancestry question blank also left the tribal affiliation question blank.

Latino origin: About 10 percent of people in our samples also reported that they are of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin (a bivariate measure). Relatively few single-race Latino American Indians reported a tribe.

Black/African-American race: About 20 percent of American Indians in our multiple-race sample also reported that they are racially black/African-American. Almost half of black-American Indians (46 percent) left the tribal affiliation sub-question blank.

Birthplace: We coded whether a person was: (1) born in the US; (2) born in Mexico or Central/South America; and (3) born abroad elsewhere. Tribal response is much more common among those born in the US than those born anywhere else.

Living with biological family: This indicator denotes whether a person lives with at least one biological relative (a parent, grandparent, sibling, or birth child) of any race, as opposed to living alone or with any other set of people. More than half of our sample members live with a relative. This measure does not show a clear bivariate relationship to tribal non-response.

Living with other American Indians: We measure whether or not the respondent lives with anyone who reported American Indian race. Note that co-residence with a relative and co-residence with an American Indian have a correlation of only about 0.5. Sample members who live with another American Indian more commonly report their tribe compared to people who live alone or with only non-Indians.

Residence in an urban area: We utilized a Census Bureau-created indicator which designates all locations as urban or non-urban. Urban areas include all intersecting census blocks and block groups with population densities of at least 1,000 people per square mile, as well as adjacent census blocks which together house at least 50,000 people (Bureau of the Census 1999). The bulk of our sample members live in urban areas. Almost 90 percent of single-race American Indians living outside urban areas did report their tribe.

Residence in a homeland area: We measure residence in a homeland area using a bivariate indicator, created by the Census Bureau for the 2000 Census (Bureau of the Census

2002). The measure tells whether a household is in a legally[5] or statistically[6] defined homeland area. About one-third of single-race sample members and about 7 percent of multiple-race sample members live in a homeland – almost all of these people (94 percent and 86 percent respectively) reported a tribal affiliation.

Results

Survey non-response:

Some single-race American Indian people did not report their tribal affiliations because of basic survey item non-response; see Table 2. Whether single-race or multiracial, people with poor English skills or very low education have substantially lower odds of reporting a tribe. Similarly, people who do not answer the ancestry question (and are perhaps predisposed to leaving all fill-in-the-blank questions empty) also have relatively low odds of reporting a tribe. Survey non-response has been demonstrated in earlier research to be more common among people living in urban areas; this bears out in our results.

[5] Federal- and state-recognized American Indian reservations, off-reservation trust land areas, tribal subdivisions which may divide these areas, Alaska Native Regional Corporations, and Hawaiian homelands make up the legally defined areas. We exclude Hawaiian homelands from our measure because they are not hypothesized to affect American Indian identity.

[6] The statistically defined homelands include Alaska Native village statistical areas, Oklahoma and other tribal statistical areas, and state designated American Indian statistical areas.

As suggested by prior research, the elders in our multiracial sample had lower odds of reporting a tribe. However, single-race elders do not follow this pattern. Those elders who are most closely connected to their American Indian heritage may choose to identify as single-race American Indian and also to make the extra effort to report their tribal affiliation, which could counteract the propensity to leave parts of the survey blank.

[TABLE 2]

Salience of American Indian identity

Measures of the salience of racial and ethnic identities are powerful predictors of tribal response and non-response, as shown in Table 3. Tribal non-response is rare among people who report American Indian ancestry, who live with another American Indian, and/or who live in a census-defined homeland area. Tribal affiliation is less commonly reported by multiracial part-black American Indians; these individuals are subjected to societal assumptions that they must identify as black (Davis 1991) and often face obstacles to genealogical research (Burroughs 2001). People born anywhere outside the US have substantially lower odds of reporting a tribe, compared to people born in the US. Perhaps their identities as immigrants and the process of adjusting to the American race system overpower their tribal identities.

In two situations, the results for the single-race American Indians are consistent with expectations while the results for the multiracial group are not. If a single-race American Indian lives with someone who speaks an American Indian language, the respondent is almost twice as likely to report a tribe as compared to homes where no one has this ability. If a multiple-race American Indian lives with a Native language speaker, however, they are actually less likely to report a tribe. Also, single-race Latino American Indians are relatively unlikely to report a tribe,

while multiple-race American Indians who are Latino are among the most likely to report their tribal affiliation. Qualitative interviews with multiracial American Indians are required to explain these results and elucidate the experiences of people in this group.

[TABLE 3]

Genealogically-based identity

We hypothesize that people who were socialized to study and embrace their heritage -- including women, middle-aged people, and relatively educated people -- will be more likely to report a tribe because tribal information is sought after in genealogical studies, and erroneous or incomplete tribal information can be entered on the census form without penalty. We found that middle-aged people and more educated people do indeed have significantly higher odds of reporting a tribe (i.e., lower odds of tribal non-response), whether they are single-race or multiple-race; see Table 4.

Two elements of Table 4 are notable, however. First, the women in our sample do not have lower odds of tribal non-response than do the men in our sample. We attribute this result to the fact that we have restricted the sample to householders, who are traditionally men. The women in the sample, therefore, may be unusual. Second, although the measures are statistically significant, they provide very poor model fit. Thus we do not consider genealogical research to be a major cause of tribal response.

[TABLE 4]

Mestizo identity

We hypothesize that Latinos and people born in Mexico, Central America, or South America who report one of their multiple races as American Indian may be working to report a mestizo

identity on a form that is not designed to acknowledge this identity. A mestizo identity includes white (Spanish), black (African-origin slaves), and indigenous ancestries which combine into an entirely new category that, incidentally, does not emphasize specific tribal heritage (Miller 2004). Thus a mestizo identity could be reported on the census form as triracial American Indian, white, and black with Latino origin and no tribal response. To test for this in our analyses, we include indicators of whether the person reports Latino heritage and whether the person was born in Mexico, Central America, or South America. As in all analyses, we predict tribal non-response separately for multiple-race American Indians (for whom mestizo identity is a viable hypothesis) and single-race American Indians (to whom this hypothesis does not apply).

Our results, provided in Table 5, do not provide support to this interpretation of non-response. While we do find that multiracial Latino American Indians (whether US-born or born in Mexico, Central America, or South America) are unlikely to report a tribe, we find that *single*-race Latino American Indians have much higher odds of tribal non-response.

[TABLE 5]

Full model

In order to adjust for simultaneous effects, our final models, shown in Table 6, include all of the above measures aimed at predicting tribal non-response.

Among single-race American Indians in our sample (shown in Model 5A of Table 6), people with the following characteristics show high odds of tribal non-response: young adult or elder, woman, low education, poor English skills, Latino, or living in an urban area. Those who *do* report their tribe are more likely found among single-race respondents with at least some college education, who live with another American Indian or someone who speaks an American

Indian language, who report American Indian ancestry, or who live in a homeland area. Most of these results are consistent with our hypotheses related to survey non-response and salience of identity. This model has substantial power to predict which single-race American Indians in our sample did not report a tribal affiliation.

Tribal non-response among multiple-race American Indians in our sample is about twice as common as among single-race sample. Multiple-race respondents who have high odds of NOT reporting a tribe are elders, people with low education, those who did not respond to the ancestry question, people born outside the US, and those who are part-black. Multiracial American Indians with high odds of *reporting* their tribal affiliation have more education, report an American Indian ancestry, are Latino, live with another American Indian, and/or live in a homeland area. It is notable that predictors of tribal non-response are substantially less powerful for the multiple-race individuals, and also that reasons for tribal non-response are not uniformly the same for the single-race group as for the multiple-race group.

[TABLE 6]

Discussion

In this research, we have sought to understand why some American Indians report no ethnic (i.e., tribal) identity. We found evidence of three main reasons that some people do not report their tribes. First, some of the tribal non-response comes from people who are generally unresponsive survey participants -- they did not answer the ancestry question, they have low educational attainment, and/or they have poor English skills. In this case, the fact that their

ethnicity information is missing probably does not reflect on their ethnic identities and improved community involvement and/or Census advertising could decrease non-response.

Second, some people – specifically single-race "American Indians" with Asian Indian or West Indian ancestry – probably did not understand the meaning of the question. Again, this is not reflective of their ethnic identities. Changes in Census advertising might eliminate these misunderstandings and effectively remove this group from the racially identified American Indian population.

Third, a substantial number of tribal non-respondents have other salient racial or ethnic heritages (Latino, multiracial black, and/or foreign-born). In these cases, the missing tribal response may be indicative of a different type of ethnic identity. Tribal ethnicity is full of detail and nuance; perhaps it cannot prevail when other identities are vying for dominance. Or it could be that family heritage information is incomplete (especially among black American Indians). Or perhaps the specific tribe is simply not seen as relevant, for example, among those with mestizo identities. Changes in Census advertising are unlikely to affect non-response in these situations. In fact, decreased non-response may not be a viable or appropriate goal. The American Indian community and the Census Bureau would do well to consider how these groups fit in to the political, social, and cultural groups encompassed by the term "American Indian." Parallel reflections about Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Latinos who do not report their specific origins would also be beneficial.

Our research also identified common characteristics of people who *do* report their tribal affiliation. Those who live in a homeland area, who live with someone who speaks an American Indian language, who report their ancestry as American Indian, and/or who are more educated

are especially likely to report their American Indian ethnicity as well as their race. Because languages and homelands are tribe-specific and are two of our most powerful predictors of tribal response, we see evidence that direct experiences with a tribe heighten the odds of reporting tribal affiliation. All of these factors point to the importance of salience as a powerful force in ethnic identity maintenance.

Single-race American Indians and multiple-race American Indians show some important differences in their patterns of tribal response in 2000: the models fit differently in the two groups and the primary predictive factors are different. The full set of predictors available in the Census data is much more effective in predicting non-response among single-race American Indians than among multiracial American Indians. Much of the non-response among single-race American Indians was from people who seemed to not understand the question (i.e., Asian Indians and West Indians who seem to have mistakenly marked the wrong category), those who lived in an urban area, and Latino American Indians. Multiple-race non-respondents were more often elders, people with poor English skills, foreign-born respondents, and black American Indians. These differences in predictive factors underscore the importance of examining the experiences of multiracial American Indians separately from single-race American Indians, instead of analyzing them together or assuming that the same processes will be in action among both groups.

Conclusions and Implications

The work presented here has implications for theoretical understandings of ethnicity, for policies and programs, and for census methodology. Theories and research about formation of

race boundaries should take into account our result that pan-tribal identity is more common among people with multiple heritages. People with ties to multiple groups have different actions and interests than those with ties to a single group, and these differences must be attended to.

We also see evidence that tribal identification (or the lack thereof) is as much a *result of* day-to-day actions (i.e., speaking a language or living near other culturally active American Indians) as it is a *contributor to* day to day actions. Thus, ethnic identity and life circumstances are inextricably related. Further research on this topic would do well to use qualitative methods.

Federal and tribal agencies which use the tribal information for program or policy development cannot include the non-respondents. Our results show that the excluded group is less educated, more urban, and more likely to have an additional racial or ethnic identity. Also, the remaining set of people – those who did report a tribe – includes many of the most strongly identified American Indians. People who do not report a tribe due to confusion (West Indian or Asian Indian) may be excluded from policy analysis without concern.

Our work also has implications for the Census Bureau as it continues to aim for full response to all questions. We have three recommendations for the Census Bureau. First, consider whether "tribe unknown" can be a coded as a valid response to the write in question; if so, include that information in the instructions. This will provide a distinction between those who lack tribal information and those who are not filling out the form completely. Second, consider placing the "American Indian or Alaska Native" answer category after the "Asian Indian" category so that Asian Indians will not make this mistake in the future. And third,

always actively encourage tribal response when advertising the census or related surveys to Native communities to minimize tribal non-response among people who know their affiliation. Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Latinos who do not report their specific origins may benefit from parallel changes to the census form.

The missing ethnicity data for American Indians is not a small issue; one-sixth of single-race American Indians and one-third of multiple-race American Indians did not report a tribe in Census 2000. Our results lend credence to the prediction made more than two decades ago that "A Native American population comprising primarily 'old' Native Americans strongly attached to their tribes will change to a population dominated by 'new' Native American individuals who may or may not have tribal attachments or even tribal identities" (Thornton 1997:39). Though they are vitally important to the identities of many American Indians, there are some who seem to have minimal connections to tribal communities and relationships. Their roles in Native communities remain to be seen.

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Figure 1: Census race question

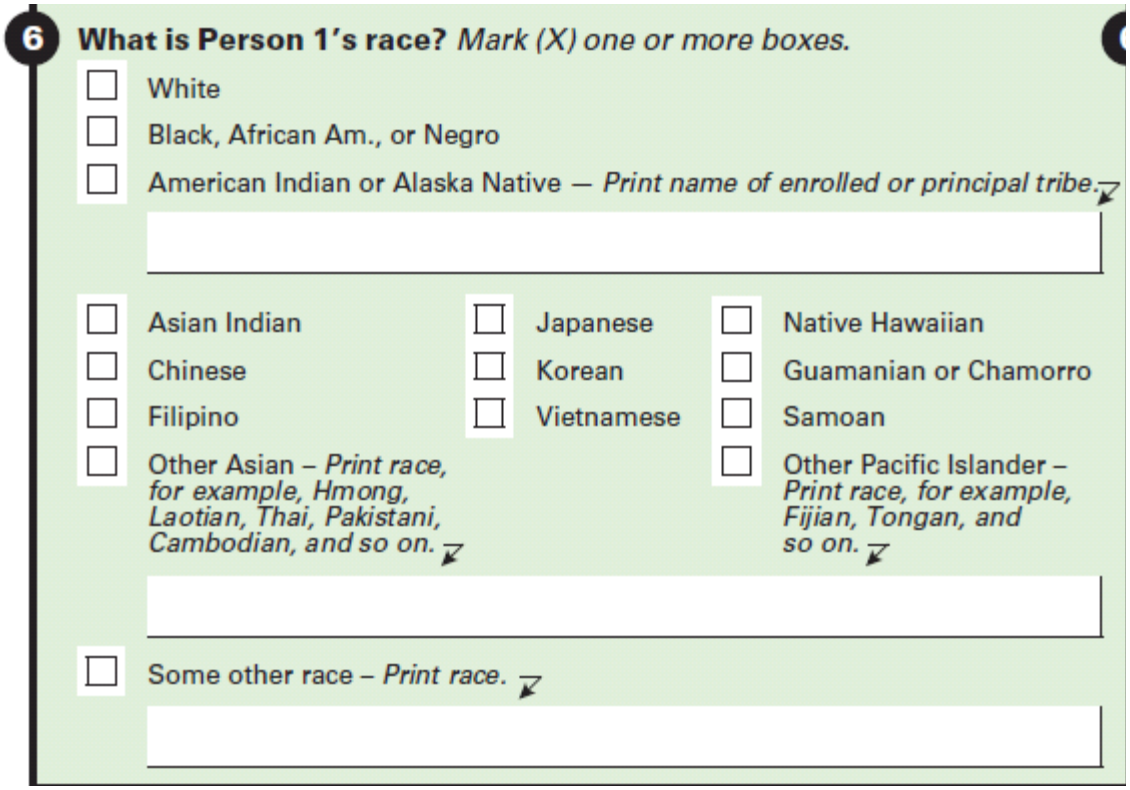

Table 1:
Characteristics of American Indian householders in Census 2000, by number of races and whether they reported a tribal affiliation

	Single Race AI		Multiple-Race AI	
	weighted total N	% no tribe	weighted total N	% no tribe
Unweighted number of cases	133,000	14.11%	93,500	29.84%
Weighted number of cases	698,900	16.95%	592,000	30.62%
Age				
25 to 44 years old	356,400	17.52%	279,500	30.16%
45 to 75 years old	314,400	16.14%	282,300	30.04%
76 years old or older	28,100	18.83%	30,300	40.27%
Gender				
Male	415,400	16.93%	357,700	29.93%
Female	283,500	16.98%	234,300	31.68%
Completed Education				
12th grade or less (no degree)	194,300	20.55%	117,700	36.29%
HS graduate or GED	193,600	16.68%	144,600	30.10%
Some college or assoc. degree	221,300	14.82%	213,400	28.51%
Bachelor degree or above	89,800	14.99%	116,300	29.42%
Ability to speak English				
English: "very well" or "well" or only	669,800	16.74%	576,900	30.26%
English: "not well" or "not at all"	29,100	21.82%	15,100	44.47%
Languages in household				
AI language spoken in home	180,300	7.49%	46,900	30.06%
AI language not spoken in home	518,600	20.24%	545,100	30.67%
Ancestry reports				
Any Am. Ind. Anc. reported	526,800	11.76%	297,700	23.50%
West Ind. or Asian Ind. Anc	1,300	30.06%	3,300	29.60%
Any other ancestry report, not AI	88,100	37.00%	213,100	35.17%
Ancestry not reported	82,800	28.47%	78,000	45.44%

Table 1, Continued:
Characteristics of American Indian householders in Census 2000, by number of races and whether they reported a tribal affiliation

	Single Race AI		Multiple-Race AI	
	weighted total N	% no tribe	weighted total N	% no tribe
Unweighted number of cases	133,000	14.11%	93,500	29.84%
Weighted number of cases	698,900	16.95%	592,000	30.62%
Hispanic origin				
Hispanic or Latino or Spanish	76,200	36.78%	57,700	33.76%
Non-Hispanic	622,700	14.52%	534,300	30.28%
Birthplace				
Born in US	657,900	15.71%	549,500	29.46%
Born in Mexico or Cent./S. America	33,300	39.29%	26,500	33.64%
Born abroad elsewhere	7,800	26.53%	16,000	65.44%
Black or African-American race also				
Multiracial part black	--	--	112,900	46.03%
Multiracial not part black	--	--	479,100	26.99%
Living with biological family				
Householder lives alone	147,200	19.17%	156,400	31.87%
Lives with any bio. family	442,000	15.99%	322,600	30.78%
Lives with others but not bio. family	109,700	17.82%	113,000	28.45%
Living with other American Indians				
Lives with another Amer. Indian	496,500	14.99%	339,200	29.92%
Does not live with another Am. Ind.	202,400	21.76%	252,900	31.57%
Location				
In an urban/metropolitan area	430,800	21.20%	462,900	31.59%
In a suburban or non-urban area	268,100	10.13%	129,100	27.16%
In a Homeland area	238,300	6.17%	41,600	14.41%
Not in a Homeland area	460,600	22.53%	550,400	31.85%

Table 2.
Logistic regression models predicting tribal non-response among single-race and multiple-race American Indians: Survey item non-response

	Model 1A		Model 1B	
	Single-race AI		Multiple-race AI	
	odds ratio	z-score	odds ratio	z-score
76 years old or older	0.99	*-0.49*	1.31	*21.75* ***
12th grade or less (no degree)	1.46	*51.85* ***	1.25	*30.87* ***
English: "not well" or "not at all"	1.25	*14.42* ***	1.69	*30.78* ***
West Ind. or Asian Ind. Anc	1.99	*11.01* ***	1.01	*0.21*
Ancestry not reported	2.17	*89.26* ***	2.06	*91.16* ***
In an urban/metropolitan area	2.49	*121.45* ***	1.29	*35.96* ***
pseudo R^2	0.0418		0.0179	
df	6		6	
weighted N	698,900		592,000	

Comparison categories are: younger than 76 years old; high school or more education; American Indian or any other ancestry reported; speaks English only or well or very well; and lives outside an urban area.

* significant at $p \leq .05$; ** significant at $p \leq .01$; *** significant at $p \leq .001$.

Table 3.

Logistic regression models predicting tribal non-response among single-race and multiple-race American Indians: Salience of racial and ethnic identities

	Model 2A		Model 2B	
	Single-race AI		Multiple-race AI	
	odds ratio	z-score	odds ratio	z-score
Any Am. Indian ancestry reported	0.38	*-129.82* ***	0.54	*-103.20* ***
Lives with any bio. family	1.01	*0.74*	1.06	*8.37* ***
Lives with another Amer. Indian	0.89	*-13.67* ***	0.92	*-12.87* ***
AI language spoken in home	0.57	*-53.99* ***	1.07	*6.01* ***
In a Homeland area	0.33	*-114.22* ***	0.42	*-60.45* ***
Hispanic/Latino	1.48	*37.76* ***	0.80	*-20.50* ***
Born outside the USA	1.03	*2.55* *	1.79	*50.28* ***
Multiracial part black	*omitted*		2.19	*112.60* ***
pseudo R^2	0.1063		0.0484	
df	7		8	
weighted N	698,900		592,000	

Comparison categories are: only non-American Indian ancestry reported or no ancestry reported; lives alone or with only non-biological family; lives alone or with only non-American Indians; lives outside of a Homeland area; born in the USA; not racially identified as black.

* significant at $p \leq .05$; ** significant at $p \leq .01$; *** significant at $p \leq .001$.

Table 4.
Logistic regression models predicting tribal non-response among single-race and multiple-race American Indians: Genealogy-based identification

	Model 3A		Model 3B	
	Single-race AI		Multiple-race AI	
	odds ratio	z-score	odds ratio	z-score
Female	1.00	*0.43*	1.09	*14.72* ***
45 to 75 years old	0.89	*-17.25* ***	0.95	*-8.93* ***
Some college or assoc. degree	0.76	*-38.39* ***	0.81	*-32.88* ***
Bachelor degree or above	0.77	*-25.08* ***	0.85	*-20.74* ***
pseudo R^2	0.0032		0.0020	
df	4		4	
weighted N	698,900		592,000	

Comparison categories are: male; 25-44 or 76-110 years old; high school education or less.

* significant at $p \leq .05$; ** significant at $p \leq .01$; *** significant at $p \leq .001$.

Table 5.
Logistic regression models predicting tribal non-response among single-race and multiple-race American Indians: Mestizo identity among Latino American Indians

	Model 4A		Model 4B	
	Single-race AI		Multiple-race AI	
	odds ratio	z-score	odds ratio	z-score
Hispanic or Latino or Spanish	2.97	*108.03* ***	1.16	*13.45* ***
Born in Mexico or Cent./S. America	1.44	*25.59* ***	1.04	*2.25* *
pseudo R^2	0.0322		0.0004	
df	2		2	
weighted N	698,900		592,000	

Comparison categories are: Non-Hispanic/Latino/Spanish; born in USA or born abroad elsewhere.

* significant at $p \leq .05$; ** significant at $p \leq .01$; *** significant at $p \leq .001$.

Table 6.
Logistic regression models predicting tribal non-response among single-race and multiple-race American Indians in 2000

	Model 5A		Model 5B	
	Single-race AI		Multiple-race AI	
	odds ratio	z-score	odds ratio	z-score
Age (comparison: 45-75 years old)				
25 to 44 years old	1.07	*9.68* ***	1.03	*5.50* ***
76 years old or older	1.14	*7.45* ***	1.32	*21.05* ***
Gender (comparison: Male)				
Female	1.12	*16.46* ***	0.99	*-2.24* *
Education (comparison: High School Graduate or GED)				
12th grade or less (no degree)	1.22	*21.96* ***	1.18	*19.05* ***
Some college or assoc. degree	0.78	*-27.64* ***	0.86	*-19.43* ***
Bachelor degree or above	0.71	*-29.64* ***	0.83	*-20.38* ***
English ability (comparison: English only or speaks English well or very well)				
English: "not well" or "not at all"	0.76	*-14.64* ***	1.05	*2.63* **
Languages in Household				
AI language spoken in home	0.57	*-54.11* ***	1.06	*5.15* ***
Ancestry (comparison: any other ancestry report)				
West Ind. or Asian Ind. Ancestry	0.80	*-3.53* ***	0.55	*-14.79* ***
Any Am. Indian ancestry reported	0.38	*-95.48* ***	0.62	*-70.87* ***
Ancestry not reported	0.99	*-0.49*	1.66	*56.52* ***
Other race and ethnicity reports				
Hispanic or Latino or Spanish	1.42	*31.39* ***	0.82	*-17.75* ***
Multiracial part black	*omitted*		2.32	*116.92* ***
Birthplace (comparison: Born in the USA)				
Born outside the USA	1.02	*1.37*	1.85	*48.04* ***
Coresidence				
Lives with any bio. family	1.00	*-0.50*	1.08	*11.52* ***
Lives with another Amer. Indian	0.87	*-15.65* ***	0.91	*-14.35* ***
Location of household				
In an urban/metropolitan area	1.19	*20.11* ***	0.98	*-2.36* *
In a Homeland area	0.33	*-102.81* ***	0.38	*-65.51* ***
pseudo R^2	0.1132		0.0584	
df	17		18	
weighted N	698,900		592,000	

* significant at $p \leq .05$; ** significant at $p \leq .01$; *** significant at $p \leq .001$.